

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 IO-10 DHA-02 ORM-02 SAJ-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3659

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO

USCINCEUR

USCINCUSNAVEUR

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7997

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR,SP, SS, MO, AL, UN

SUBJ: SPANISH SAHARA: THREE-WAY AGREEMENT REPORTED

1. SPANISH OFFICIALDOM HAS BEEN VERY TIGHT-LIPPED ON THE SAHARA NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THIS MORNING COL.BLANCO, THE DIRGEN FOR PROMOTION OF THE SAHARA TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOS HAD REACHED AN AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA ON SAHARA.HE WAS RELUCTANT TO REVEAL DETAILS. BLANCO SOUNDED QUITE FRUSTRATED. HE DESCRIBED IT AS A "BAD AGREEMENT" BUT NECESSARY IN THE
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CIRCUMSTANCES. ASKED IF AGREEMENT INCLUDED POSSIBILITY OF

REFERENDUM FOR SAHARAN POPULATION, DIRGEN REPLIED THAT CONSULTATIONS WITH "LOCAL TRIBAL LEADERS" (MEANING, WE PRESUME, SUCH MEN AS JATRI, THE HEAD OF THE YEMAA WHO DEFECTED TO MOROCCO) WAS FORESEEN. HE SAID ONLY THE UN COULD INSIST UPON A REFERENDUM ONCE SPAIN HAD WITHDRAWN FROM AREA.

2. BLANCO SAID GOS WAS EXTREMELY DISAPPOINTED WITH UN'S INABILITY TO PREVENT SITUATION IN SAHARA FROM DEGENERATING INTO WAR. SPAIN, HE SAID, HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACT ON ITS OWN TO PREVENT HOSTILITIES GIVEN THE WEAKNESS OF UN RESOLUTIONS AND THE UN'S UNWILLINGNESS TO SEND ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVES TO THE SAHARA TO ACT AS ON-THE-SCENE OBSERVERS AND MONITORS. NOW THAT AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, HE SAID, GOS WAS CONCERNED THAT UN MIGHT UPSET IT IN SOME FASHION CAUSING A RETURN TO THE CRITICAL SITUATION OF THE PAST TWO WEEKS. BLANCO SAID THAT SPAIN WOULD NOT FEEL RELIEVED OF THE THREAT OF HOSTILITIES UNTIL THE LAST SPANISH SOLDIER WAS WITHDRAWN.

3. SPAIN, BLANCO SAID, HAD TO AVOID HOSTILITIES IN THE SAHARA AT ALL COSTS. IT COULD NOT HAVE A WAR IN THE SAHARA AT THIS CRITICAL JUNCTURE AT HOME NOR COULD IT HAVE "WHITE SPANIARDS" SHOOTING MOROCCANS, SAHARANS, OR ANY PEOPLE INHABITING THE AREA WITHOUT RISKING ITS RELATIONS WITH A HOST OF COUNTRIES.

4. ASKED ABOUT ALGERIA, DIRGEN SAID ALGERIA WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HARASS THE MOROCCANS IN THE SAHARA THROUGH SURROGATES SUCH AS THE F POLISARIO. BLANCO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT F POLISARIO HAD MANY SMALL UNITS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE NORTHEAST SAHARA AND ALONG THE MAURITANIAN BORDER IN THE SOUTH. HE NOTED THAT THERE WERE TRIBAL AFFINITIES BETWEEN THE MAURITANIANS AND SOME OF THE F POLISARIO FOLLOWERS WHICH WOULD COMPLICATE MOROCCO'S PROBLEM -- NOT SPAIN'S -- OF SUPPRESSING INSURGENCY.

5. COMMENT: THE GOS SEEMS TO HAVE DECIDED THAT THE RISK OF DISTURBANCES IN ITS RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA IS LESS THAN
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THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL RISKS THAT WOULD FLOW FROM A BLOODLETTING BETWEEN ARAB MOROCCO AND SPAIN. IT IS NOTEWORTHY THAT, DURING SOJOURN OF MOROCCAN PREMIER AND FONMIN, AND MAURITANIAN FONMIN IN MADRID THESE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, THE PRESIDENT OF THE ALGERIAN GAS MONOPOLY, SONATRACH, HAS ALSO BEEN IN MADRID, REPORTEDLY WORKING ON DETAILS OF THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED GAS CONTRACT. ACCORDING TO A WELL-INFORMED MEMBER OF THE "CORTES", THE GOS HAS BEEN

PREOCCUPIED THROUGHOUT THE SAHARAN CRISIS TO AVOID
ANY ACTION WHICH MIGHT JEOPARDIZE ENERGY SUPPLIES. WHETHER
OR NOT REPORTED AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA
WILL MEET THIS CRITERIA REMAINS TO BE SEEN.
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